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APPLICATION NO.	FILING DATE	FIRST NAMED INVENTOR	ATTORNEY DOCKET NO.	CONFIRMATION NO.
09/736,230	12/15/2000	Masaaki Noda	0819-474	9138

7590

06/06/2003

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EXAMINER

NGUYEN, JOSEPH H

ART UNIT

PAPER NUMBER

2815

DATE MAILED: 06/06/2003

Please find below and/or attached an Office communication concerning this application or proceeding.

Office Action Summary

Application No.

09/736,230

Applicant(s)

NODA ET AL.

Examiner

Joseph Nguyen

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-- The MAILING DATE of this communication appears on the cover sheet with the correspondence address --

Period for Reply

A SHORTENED STATUTORY PERIOD FOR REPLY IS SET TO EXPIRE 3 MONTH(S) FROM THE MAILING DATE OF THIS COMMUNICATION.

- Extensions of time may be available under the provisions of 37 CFR 1.136(a). In no event, however, may a reply be timely filed after SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- If the period for reply specified above is less than thirty (30) days, a reply within the statutory minimum of thirty (30) days will be considered timely.
- If NO period for reply is specified above, the maximum statutory period will apply and will expire SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- Failure to reply within the set or extended period for reply will, by statute, cause the application to become ABANDONED (35 U.S.C. § 133).
- Any reply received by the Office later than three months after the mailing date of this communication, even if timely filed, may reduce any earned patent term adjustment. See 37 CFR 1.704(b).

Status

- 1) ☒ Responsive to communication(s) filed on 20 February 2003.
- 2a) ☐ This action is **FINAL**. 2b) ☒ This action is non-final.
- 3) ☐ Since this application is in condition for allowance except for formal matters, prosecution as to the merits is closed in accordance with the practice under *Ex parte Quayle*, 1935 C.D. 11, 453 O.G. 213.

Disposition of Claims

- 4) ☒ Claim(s) 1-12 is/are pending in the application.
- 4a) Of the above claim(s) _____ is/are withdrawn from consideration.
- 5) ☐ Claim(s) _____ is/are allowed.
- 6) ☒ Claim(s) 1-12 is/are rejected.
- 7) ☐ Claim(s) _____ is/are objected to.
- 8) ☐ Claim(s) _____ are subject to restriction and/or election requirement.

Application Papers

- 9) ☐ The specification is objected to by the Examiner.
- 10) ☒ The drawing(s) filed on 15 December 2000 is/are: a) ☒ accepted or b) ☐ objected to by the Examiner.
Applicant may not request that any objection to the drawing(s) be held in abeyance. See 37 CFR 1.85(a).
- 11) ☐ The proposed drawing correction filed on _____ is: a) ☐ approved b) ☐ disapproved by the Examiner.
If approved, corrected drawings are required in reply to this Office action.
- 12) ☐ The oath or declaration is objected to by the Examiner.

Priority under 35 U.S.C. §§ 119 and 120

- 13) ☒ Acknowledgment is made of a claim for foreign priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119(a)-(d) or (f).
- a) ☒ All b) ☐ Some * c) ☐ None of:
1. ☒ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received.
2. ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received in Application No. _____.
3. ☐ Copies of the certified copies of the priority documents have been received in this National Stage application from the International Bureau (PCT Rule 17.2(a)).
- * See the attached detailed Office action for a list of the certified copies not received.
- 14) ☐ Acknowledgment is made of a claim for domestic priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119(e) (to a provisional application).
- a) ☐ The translation of the foreign language provisional application has been received.
- 15) ☐ Acknowledgment is made of a claim for domestic priority under 35 U.S.C. §§ 120 and/or 121.

Attachment(s)

- 1) ☐ Notice of References Cited (PTO-892)
- 2) ☐ Notice of Draftsperson's Patent Drawing Review (PTO-948)
- 3) ☒ Information Disclosure Statement(s) (PTO-1449) Paper No(s) 13.
- 4) ☐ Interview Summary (PTO-413) Paper No(s). _____.
- 5) ☐ Notice of Informal Patent Application (PTO-152)
- 6) ☐ Other: _____.

DETAILED ACTION

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 103

The following is a quotation of 35 U.S.C. 103(a) which forms the basis for all obviousness rejections set forth in this Office action:

(a) A patent may not be obtained though the invention is not identically disclosed or described as set forth in section 102 of this title, if the differences between the subject matter sought to be patented and the prior art are such that the subject matter as a whole would have been obvious at the time the invention was made to a person having ordinary skill in the art to which said subject matter pertains. Patentability shall not be negated by the manner in which the invention was made.

Claims 1-12 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over figures 14-18 of the acknowledged prior art (APA) in view of Satoh et al.

Regarding claim 1, figures 14 -18 of (APA) disclose a semiconductor device with a high breakdown voltage comprising a semiconductor substrate 1 of a first conductivity type; a semiconductor region 2 of a second conductivity type which is defined in the substrate; a drain region 6 of the second conductivity type which is defined approximately at the center of the semiconductor region; a body region 4 of the first conductivity type, which is defined in the semiconductor region so as to be spaced apart from and to surround the drain region; a source region 5 of the second conductivity type which is defined in the body region; a gate insulating film 8 deposited over the body region; a gate electrode 10b formed on the gate insulating film; a field insulating film 3 deposited over a part of the semiconductor region, the part being located between the body and drain regions; a metal electrode 15 electrically connected to the drain region; a plurality of electrically floating gate electrodes 16,17, which are spaced apart from and surround the drain region when the device is viewed from over the substrate; and an interlevel dielectric film 9 over the gate insulating film and the field insulating film and

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the floating plate electrodes; wherein parts of the metal electrode are extended onto the interlevel dielectric film and are located over the floating plate electrodes. (APA) does not disclose each said part of the metal electrodes is capacitively coupled to an associated one of the plate electrodes. However, Satoh et al discloses on figure 5A each part of the metal electrode 16 is capacitively coupled to an associated one of the plate electrodes 14. In view of such teaching, it would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art at the time the invention was made to modify (APA) by having each part of the metal electrode being capacitively coupled to an associated one of the plate electrode for the purpose of improving the performance of the semiconductor device.

Together, (APA) and Satoh et al disclose the structures of claims 2- 12.

Response to Arguments

Applicant's arguments filed on 2/23/2003 have been fully considered but they are not persuasive.

Applicant argues that APA relates to a semiconductor device with high breakdown voltage, while Satoh is directed to a non-volatile semiconductor memory device. However, figures 14-18 of (APA) structurally relates to a non-volatile semiconductor memory device because the specification in no way states the disclosed device is not a memory device, and in fact refers to some elements as "floating", a term associated with a memory device therein. On the other hand, the term "a high breakdown voltage" is merely a preamble. A preamble is generally not accorded any

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patentable weight where the body of the claim does not depend on the preamble for completeness but, instead, the structural limitations are able to stand alone (MPEP, 2111.02).

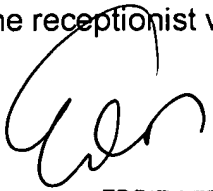
Moreover, applicant argues that in (APA) the metal electrode 15 that is electrically connected to the drain region is not connected to the floating metal electrodes. However, Saitoh et al discloses this feature as mentioned above in this Office Action. Further, the metal electrode 15 is extended onto the interval dielectric film 9 and located over the floating plate electrodes 16, 17 in figure 15 in the same manner as disclosed in figure 2 of the present application. Therefore, the combination of (APA) and Saitoh would disclose all the structures set forth in the claimed invention.

Conclusion

Any inquiry concerning this communication or earlier communications from the examiner should be directed to Joseph Nguyen whose telephone number is (703) 308-1269. The examiner can normally be reached on Monday-Friday, 7:30 am- 4:30 pm

If attempts to reach the examiner by telephone are unsuccessful, the examiner's supervisor, Eddie Lee can be reached on (703) 308-1690. The fax phone numbers for the organization where this application or proceeding is assigned is (703) 308-7382 for regular communications. Any inquiry of a general nature or relating to the status of this application or proceeding should be directed to the receptionist whose telephone number is (703) 308-0956.

JN
June 3, 2003



EDDIE LEE
SUPERVISORY PATENT EXAMINER
TECHNOLOGY CENTER 2800